



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

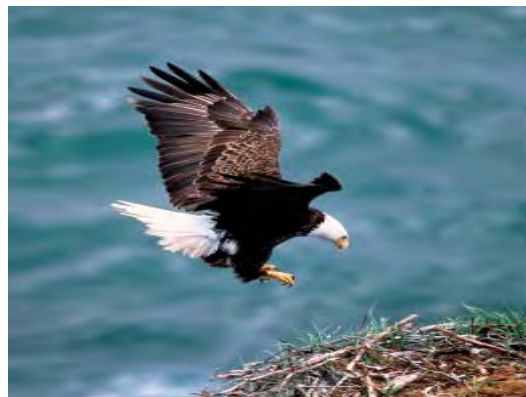
## Kenai Fish & Wildlife Field Office

### *Project Planning*

The Project Planning program uses the best available science and practical land management techniques to ensure that land use/land development projects proceed in a manner consistent with the Service's mission. Our focus is on early coordination and taking a landscape level approach to resource problem solving, especially where we have environmental review responsibilities under federal statutes. We provide biological advice to other federal and state agencies, industry, and members of the public concerning the conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitats that may be affected by large-scale development activities, such as road construction, mineral exploration, utility line installation, and dredge and fill activities. Recommendations are made to maximize our effectiveness with the goal of achieving reasonable ways to avoid, minimize, or compensate for harmful effects to fish, wildlife and their habitats.

The Kenai FWFO is currently involved in planning and scoping efforts as well as assisting with the development and implementation of the following major activities on the Kenai Peninsula:

- **Sterling Highway MP 58 to 79** – An ADOT project to improve the segment of the Sterling Highway between the east entrance to Skilak Lake Road and Kenai Keys Road. The majority of the project is within the boundaries of the Kenai NWR.
- **Sterling Highway MP 45 to 60 / Cooper Landing Bypass** – An ADOT project to replace a 15 mi. stretch of the Sterling Highway through Cooper Landing to address seasonal traffic congestion, local access issues and roadway deficiencies. The project is within or near the Chugach National Forest, Kenai River Special Management Area, Kenai NWR, Mystery Creek Wilderness, Kenai River Recreation Area, Juneau Falls Recreation Area, Lower Russian Lake Recreation Area, and the Resurrection Pass National Recreation Trail.
- **Homer Wetlands Working Group** – Interagency project to update USACE 1989 Homer Wetlands Study Maps and associated wetland designations. New wetland mapping occurred in 2004/2005. Work involves using recent aeriels, latest soil survey information and on-ground vegetation evaluations to classify wetland systems, describe wetland relationships to both landscape position and hydrology, and predict wetland functions.



*Eagle nest on the Kenai Peninsula. Eagle issues arise frequently when public works activities and/or private property development occur during the nesting season.*  
USFWS Photo by Dave Menke



*Sockeye spawning in the Kenai River. Our duties include providing valuable input during the planning process to ensure that adverse effects to anadromous streams do not occur.*

• ***Oil and Gas Development*** – Exploration and production of oil and natural gas is continuing on the Kenai Peninsula with expansion of the Swanson River Oil field and natural gas development in the Ninilchik area.

• ***Agrium Blue Sky Project*** – Feasibility study under way to evaluate the potential use of coal gasification as a feedstock for the Kenai Nitrogen facility (Agrium) in Nikiski. Project components would include the development of the Beluga coalfield, construction of a world-scale gasifier, a coal-fired 355-megawatt power plant and modifications to existing Agrium facilities, including new dock construction.

• ***Large Scale Subdivision Projects*** – A number of major subdivision developments are being proposed in Homer and Anchor Point. These projects involve clearing of vegetation, significant wetland loss and dramatic increases in impermeable surfaces. We continue to work closely with EPA, the Borough's Coastal Management Staff and others to recommend ways of managing and minimizing the resulting impacts to water quality, hydrology, bird habitat, fisheries resources, and potentially the molting and wintering range of the threatened Stellers eider.



*Red-throated loon on nest. Migratory bird issues often arise when development projects occur in the spring and summer months.  
USFWS Photo by Dave Menke*



*Bank erosion on the Kenai River*